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ABSTRACT

The past few decades have seen substantial debate over the effectiveness of preparation programs for school administrators. A program is suggested that is based on the Texas superintendent certificate of 1994. Eight standards addressing superintendent performance were developed by the American Association of School Administrators: (1) learner-centered values and ethics of leadership; (2) learner-centered leadership and district culture; (3) learner-centered human resources leadership and management; (4) learner-centered policy and governance; (5) learner-centered communications and community relations; (6) learner-centered organizational leadership and management; (7) learner-centered curriculum planning and development; and (8) learner-centered instructional leadership and management. For each of these, specific performance indicators are offered. New instructional strategies for classes preparing administrators include ones that actively involve students in the learning process, that eliminate student anonymity, and that personalize instruction. Inductive learning, problem-based learning strategies, collaborative research, clinical experiences, distance learning, and reflective seminars are new trends in instructional strategies. A standards-based superintendent program is offered in table format with course titles, standards addressed, and instructional strategies. Strategies for delivery and evaluation are delineated. The programs would utilize constructivist learning theory. Students would construct knowledge, as opposed to teachers imparting it. Another aspect of the program would be the importance of extensive and imaginative use of technology. (Contains 28 references.) (RKJ)

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Preparing Superintendents Through Standards-Based Instruction

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Preparing Superintendents Through Standards-Based Instruction

The past few decades have seen substantial debate over the effectiveness of preparation programs for school administrators. When Brent, Haller, and McNamara (1997) posed the question "Does graduate training in educational administration improve America's schools?" and answered with a firm "No," they were simply adding their voices to a chorus of critics. Criticisms of administrator preparation have been wide ranging. In the late 1980's Carver (1988) and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (1989) chided administrator preparation programs for having relatively weak links to the field that they purported to serve. Later Cambron-McCabe (1993) and Murphy (1993) criticized programs for not paying enough attention to issues of curriculum, instruction, and learning, despite the preeminence of these concerns in the daily lives of school administrators. Last, but hardly least, educational administration courses have been excoriated as lacking in sufficient rigor, without cohesion or a grounding in theories of cognition and leadership, and for having content that is boring or outdated (Murphy, 1993; Van Berkum, Richardson & Lane, 1994). The Brent, Haller, and McNamara article prompted the *AASA Professor*, a publication of the American Association of School Administrators written by and for professors of educational administration, to devote a special edition to a discussion of university-based preparation programs. While no single conclusion was reached, the editors hoped that university professors and practicing school administrators "will continue the dialog" (AASA Professor, Summer, 1998, p. 1). Those of us who spend our professional lives laboring to prepare a new generation of school administrators devoutly hope that the dialog will continue and that all voices will be heard.

Yet, as I begin my fourteenth year as a professor of educational administration, I am aware that my own administrator preparation program has changed in significant ways. The same is true of the institutions with which I am most familiar. The changes have been prompted by several forces: revisions in state licensing provisions; a changing public school population; competition from educational service centers and professional associations for the task of preparing school administrators; and of course, state wide

high stakes testing, which has so dramatically reshaped the public schools of this and other states. But perhaps the single most influential force for change, at least in Texas, has been the development of written standards of administrator performance. These standards have been, perhaps, the most significant factor in the development of administrator preparation programs in both universities and in alternative settings.

Developing the standards.

The creation of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) in 1988 was a milestone in the development of standards for educational leadership preparation. The creation of the NPBEA was an outgrowth of recommendations by the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEA), established by the University Council on Educational Administration (UCEA) in 1985. NPBEA's reform agenda, *Improving the preparation of school administrators: An agenda for reform*, was published in 1989. Although NPBEA did not directly address standards as such, through recommendations, occasional papers, and national seminars, it was able to influence policy on the national level (McCarthy, 1999). In 1994 a working group was created to develop guidelines for educational leadership programs to be accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). NCATE began using the new guidelines to accredit educational administration programs in 1997 (McCarthy).

Also in 1994, NPBEA joined with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to form a consortium to establish national licensing standards for school administrators. This consortium, now called the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), developed six standards for the preparation of school leaders that were adopted by the twenty-four states who were a part of the consortium. The ISLLC standards are further being used by five states to develop performance-based assessment instruments to be used for the licensing and re-licensing of school administrators.

For purposes of this discussion, the most relevant standards are the American Association of School Administrator's *General Professional Standards for the Superintendency*.

Published in 1993 by the AASA Commission on Standards for the Superintendency, the standards were developed from earlier standards first published in 1982 (Vornberg, 2000). There are eight standards addressing superintendent performance in the following areas:

- Leadership and district culture
- Policy and governance
- Communications and community relations
- Organizational management
- Curriculum planning and development
- Instructional management
- Human resource management
- Values and ethics of leadership

When they were published, the standards received both strong support and some criticism. Writing in *The School Administrator* Cuban (1994) expressed reservation over the failure of the standards to include performance indicators that held superintendents accountable for the academic performance of students, the improvement of teaching, or the performance of principals. In the same issue Hawley (1994) wrote that the standards were too general and probably unreachable. More recently, Achilles (1998) lamented the failure of preparation standards in general to address the use of research-based concepts and practices to improve schools. Whatever their shortcomings may be, the current standards for administrator preparation offer a research based and structured approach to the design of administrator preparation programs.

Texas' Standards for the Superintendent Certificate.

The first set of standards for the Texas superintendent certificate was issued in 1994. The latest revision occurred in 1999. There are eight standards, together with their performance indicators. The standards are included below:

1. Learner-Centered Values and Ethics of Leadership. A superintendent is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner. A superintendent understands, values, and is able to:

- Model and promote the highest standards of conduct, ethical principles, and integrity in decision making, actions and behaviors.
- Implement policies and procedures that encourage all district personnel to comply with Chapter 247 of this title, relating to the *Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.*
- Serve as an articulate spokesperson for the importance of education in a free democratic society.
- Enhance teaching and learning by participation in quality professional development activities, study of current professional literature and research, and interaction with the district's staff and students.
- Maintain personal physical and emotional wellness.
- Demonstrate the courage to be a champion for children.

2. Learner-Centered Leadership and District Culture. A superintendent is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students and shapes district culture by facilitating the development, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community. A superintendent understands, values, and is able to:

- Establish and support a district culture that promotes learning, high expectations, and academic rigor for self, student, and staff performance.
- Facilitate the development and implementation of a shared vision that focuses on teaching and learning.
- Implement strategies for the involvement of all stakeholders in planning processes and facilitate planning between constituencies.
- Conduct and analyze district/school climate inventories for effective, responsive decision-making.

- Institute and monitor planning processes that include strategies designed to ensure the accomplishment of district goals and objectives to achieve the district's vision.
- Facilitate the use and allocation of all available resources to support the implementation of the district's visions and goals.
- Recognize and celebrate contributions of staff and community toward realization of the district's vision.
- Demonstrate an awareness of emerging issues and trends affecting the education community.
- Encourage and model innovative thinking and risk-taking and view problems as learning opportunities.
- Promote multicultural awareness, gender sensitivity, and the appreciation of diversity in the education community.

3. Learner-Centered Human Resources Leadership and Management. A superintendent is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by implementing a staff evaluation and development system to improve the performance of all staff members, selects appropriate models for supervision and staff development, and applies the legal requirements for personnel management. A superintendent understands, values, and is able to:

- Develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive professional development plan designed to specifically address areas of identified district, campus, and/or staff need.
- Facilitate the application of adult learning principles to all professional development activities, including the use of relevant issues and tasks and the use of support and follow-up strategies to facilitate implementation.
- Implement strategies to enhance professional capabilities at the district and campus level to ensure support for a continuum of services and programming.
- Deliver effective presentations and facilitate the learning of both small and large groups.

- Implement effective strategies for the recruitment, selection, induction, development, and promotion of staff.
- Develop and institute comprehensive staff evaluation models that include both formative and summative assessment and appraisal strategies.
- Demonstrate use of district and staff evaluation data for personnel policy development and decision-making
- Demonstrate and apply knowledge of certification requirements and standards.
- Diagnose and improve organizational health/morale by the implementation of strategies and programs designed to provide on-going assistance and support to personnel.

4. Learner-Centered Policy and Governance. A superintendent is an educational leader who promotes success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context and by working with the board of trustees to define mutual expectations, policies, and standards. A superintendent understands, values, and is able to:

- Define and apply the general characteristics of internal and external political systems to the educational organization.
- Demonstrate and apply appropriate knowledge of legal issues affecting education.
- Provide leadership in defining superintendent and board roles, mutual expectations, and effective superintendent-board working relationships.
- Determine the political, economic, and social aspects and/or needs of groups in the community and those of the community at large, for effective and responsive decision-making.
- Prepare and recommend district policies to improve student learning and district performance in compliance with state and federal requirements.
- Utilize legal systems to protect the rights of students and staff and to improve learning opportunities.
- Apply laws, policies, and procedures fairly, wisely, and considerately.

- Access state and national political systems to provide input on critical educational issues.

5. Learner-Centered Communications and Community Relations. A superintendent is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources. A superintendent understands, values, and is able to:

- Develop and implement an effective and comprehensive district internal and external communications plan and public relations program.
- Analyze community and district structures and identify major opinion leaders and their relationships to district goals and programs.
- Establish partnerships with parents, area businesses, institutions of higher education, and community groups to strengthen programs and support district goals.
- Implement effective strategies to systematically communicate with and gather input from all stakeholders in the district.
- Communicate effectively with all social, cultural, ethnic, and racial groups in the school district and community.
- Develop and utilize all formal and informal techniques to obtain accurate perceptions of the district staff, parents, and community.
- Use effective consensus building and conflict management skills.
- Articulate the district's vision and priorities to the community and to the media.
- Influence the media by utilizing proactive communication strategies that serve to enhance and promote the district's vision.
- Communicate an articulate position on educational issues.
- Demonstrate effective and forceful writing, speaking, and active listening skills.

6. Learner-Centered Organizational Leadership and Management. A superintendent is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by leadership and

management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. A superintendent understands, values and is able to:

- Implement appropriate management techniques and group processes to define roles, assign functions, delegate effectively, and determine accountability for goal attainment.
- Implement processes for gathering, analyzing, and using data for informed decision-making.
- Frame, analyze, and resolve problems using appropriate problem-solving techniques and decision-making skills.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate change processes for organizational effectiveness.
- Implement strategies that enable the physical plant, equipment, and support systems to operate safely, efficiently, and effectively to maintain conducive learning environments throughout the district.
- Perform effective budget planning, management, account auditing, and monitoring and establish district procedures for accurate and effective fiscal reporting.
- Acquire, allocate, and manage resources according to district vision and priorities.
- Manage one's own time and the time of others to maximize attainment of district goals.
- Use technology to enhance school district operations.

7. Learner-Centered Curriculum Planning and Development. A superintendent is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the design and implementation of curricula and strategic plans that enhance teaching and learning; alignment of curriculum, curriculum resources and assessment; and the use of various forms of assessment to measure student performance. A superintendent understands, values, and is able to:

- Apply understanding of pedagogy, cognitive development, and child and adolescent growth and development to facilitate effective district curricular decisions.
- Implement curriculum planning methods to anticipate and respond to occupational and economic trends and to achieve optimal student learning.
- Implement core curriculum design and delivery systems to ensure instructional continuity and instructional integrity across the district.
- Develop and implement collaborative processes for the systematic assessment and renewal of the curriculum to ensure appropriate scope, sequence, content, and alignment.
- Evaluate and provide direction for improving district curriculum in ways that are based upon sound, research-based practices.
- Facilitate the use of technology, telecommunications, and information systems to enrich the school district curriculum and enhance learning for all students.
- Facilitate the use of creative, critical thinking, and problem solving tools by staff and other district stakeholders.
- Facilitate the effective coordination of district and campus curricular and extracurricular programs.

8. Learner-Centered Instructional Leadership and Management. A superintendent is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a district culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. A superintendent understands, values, and is able to:

- Apply knowledge and understanding of motivational theories to create conditions that empower staff, students, families, and the community to strive to achieve the district's vision.
- Facilitate the implementation of sound, research-based theories and techniques of classroom management, student discipline, and school safety to ensure a school district environment that is conducive to learning.

- Facilitate the development of a learning organization that supports instructional improvement, builds and implements an appropriate curriculum, and incorporates best practice.
- Facilitate the ongoing study of current best practice and relevant research and encourage the application of this knowledge to district/school improvement initiatives.
- Plan and manage student activity programs to fulfill developmental, social, cultural, athletic, leadership and scholastic needs.
- Institute a comprehensive school district program of student assessment, interpretation of data, and reporting of state and national data results.
- Apply knowledge and understanding of special programs to ensure that students with special needs are provided quality, flexible instructional programs and services.
- Analyze and deploy available instructional resources in the most effective and equitable manner to enhance student learning.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate change processes to improve student and adult learning, and the climate for learning.
- Create an environment in which all students can learn.

These standards closely track the *Professional Standards for the Superintendency* (AASA) and provide, in the words of Hoyle, English and Steffy (1998) "a common core of knowledge, dispositions, and performances" (p. vii) to guide the preparation of school leaders. As such they are valuable tools to be used in the design of preparation programs.

Using the standards for instruction.

What role do the standards play in the instruction of future school leaders? Perhaps the most effective way to use the standards are as benchmarks to measure attainment of the skills and knowledge required of school leaders (Hoyle, English & Steffy, 1998). While it may be impossible in the short time span available to a typical preparation program to master all of the skills and knowledge contained in the standards, still the basic components of the standards provide a structure around which administrators might

design their own continuing professional learning. No preparation program, in any professional field, can be expected to provide their graduates with all they need to know for a successful career. But what the preparation program can and should be expected to do is to send graduates into their chosen professional field equipped with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will permit initial satisfactory performance and the framework for continuing professional development. The standards supply these requirements.

Do the standards constitute the sum total of superintendent preparation? Hoyle, English and Steffy (1998) suggest that the preparation of school administrators in an academic setting should not be limited to the standards alone. There should be more to an educational administrator than just a set of technical skills. Paul Houston (2001) was correct when he noted that the superintendency was not so much a job as it was a calling. But the standards do represent "the accumulation of research and wisdom about educational administration as an academic discipline and professional practice" (p. 181). Therefore program content and instructional strategies should be designed to enable students to master as much of the content embedded in the standards as possible.

There are a number of instructional strategies available for this purpose. McCarthy (1999) notes that there is a national trend among administrator preparation programs to shift away from faculty-centered approaches to instruction and toward strategies that actively involve students in the learning process, that eliminate student anonymity, and that personalize instruction. This more student-centered approach to instruction of fledgling administrators incorporates the use of inductive, problem-based learning strategies that are grounded in adult learning theory and the reality of public schools (Bridges, 1992; Murphy, 1992; Hallinger & McCary, 1991). These instructional strategies include problem-based learning (Bridges, 1992), collaborative research and clinical experiences (Milstein, 1993), distance learning (McCarthy & Kuh, 1997), and reflective seminars, in which students explore the beliefs and values that guide decision-making and consider the multiple perspectives from which existing educational dilemmas may be viewed (Schon, 1987). Some programs are also moving away from the

traditional three hour credit classes and replacing them with learning modules and seminars formats where possible (Sirotnik & Mueller, 1993). The general pedagogical trend is to involve students more fully in the direction of their own learning and to create learning experiences that capture the realities of practice in the field.

What might a standards-based superintendent program look like? The following table displays one possible configuration that meets the necessary criteria in that it proposes to (1) incorporate the standards for superintendent certification and (2) emphasize student-centered and field-based instructional strategies.

A Standards-Based Superintendent Preparation Program

COURSE TITLE	STANDARDS ADDRESSED	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES USED
Seminar in the Superintendency	Leadership & District Culture Policy & Governance Organizational Management Values & Ethics	Reflective Writing Problem-based Learning Guided Discussion in a Seminar Setting Collaborative Research Leadership Assessment Directed Reading
Human Resource Management & Instructional Leadership	Human Resource Management Curriculum Planning & Development Instructional Management Communications& Community Relations	Reflective Writing Problem-based Learning Simulation Collaborative Research Guided Discussion in a Seminar Setting Directed Reading
School Finance & Business Management	Organizational Management Values & Ethics	Simulation Problem-based Learning Collaborative Research Guided Discussion

Field-based Practicum	All	Collaborative Action Research Mentoring Reflective Writing Reflective Seminar

Delivery of this program is built around seminars supported by a web site utilizing email, a discussion board, and video conferencing. The decision to use electronic course resources as a supplement to instruction (Maddux & Cummings, 2000) rather than the primary means of instruction is a deliberate one. While electronic media can provide opportunities for students to interact with one another either in one-to-one or one-to-many configurations, it cannot replace the power of face-to-face interaction, especially when the purposes of the interaction include the formation of attitudes and values or the sharing of craft knowledge. For these purposes human interaction conducted face-to-face is irreplacable.

Course seminars meet on Saturdays except for the *School Finance and Business Management* portion of the program, which is offered in a three-week mini-session format. Two full-time faculty members are available to instruct the program and clinical faculty, e.g. practicing superintendents, association executives, and others, are available as appropriate. The program can be completed in either one or two academic years. The determining factor is the timing of the Field-based Practicum. The practicum extends over one academic year and may be taken concurrently with or following completion of the course work. However timed, the practicum encourages students to demonstrate competency in all of the standards. During the practicum students will complete a collaborative action research project designed in consultation with the on-site mentor and the student's university supervisor. The practicum also provides for opportunities for shadowing a practicing superintendent, sharing of experiences with colleagues both electronically and face-to-face, and time to gain perspective on the cycle of a superintendent's responsibilities throughout the school year. At the present time, the first course, *Seminar in the Superintendency*, *School Finance and Business Management*, and the *Field-based Practicum* are in place. The *Human Resource Management & Instructional Leadership* seminar is under development and will be piloted in the spring

of 2002. The target is to have the entire program in place and operational by the fall of 2002.

Assessment activities to measure student's ability to meet the standards might take several forms. The criteria to be used in designing appropriate assessments flow directly from the performances indicated for each standard itself. Additionally, products or performances selected to assess proficiency should resemble the types of problems superintendents will face in the real world. For example, in assessing the standard for Leadership and District Culture, students might produce or demonstrate the following:

- A completed assessment of their leadership style and a growth plan developed from their analysis of an assessment instrument.
- A completed vision statement created collaboratively with the involvement of other district staff.
- An analysis of the climate of the school district using a validated instrument.
- Evidence of an ongoing planning process that the student has led.

To demonstrate proficiency in the standard addressing Organizational Leadership and Management, the student might:

- Demonstrate the ability to use data to make a decision affecting district policy or operations.
- Demonstrate appropriate problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.
- Document an instance when the student delegated authority appropriately.

Finally, to show mastery of Policy and Governance skills, the student could

- Conduct or assist in conducting a school board training on appropriate roles and responsibilities for the board and the superintendent.
- Apply knowledge of internal and external district political forces to the solution of a district problem.

Each of these products is aligned to the *Standards for the Superintendency* and permits the student to demonstrate that he or she can use the required skills and knowledge. Moreover, the assessments are representative of the type of problems that might confront a superintendent in the field.

Incorporating constructivist learning theory.

Administrator preparation programs are often criticized as lacking grounding in a cognitive theory. The program discussed herein utilizes constructivist learning theory as a guide for both program design and for the identification of instructional strategies. Constructivism lends itself as a theoretical foundation because of its basic assumptions, its relevance to adult learners, and its implications for leadership. Smith-Gratto (2000) explains that constructivism is based on the assumption that learning is an active process by which the learner builds new knowledge and understanding from his or her own individual experience. When a learner encounters a new experience or new information, the learner seeks to place the new experience or information into an already existing mental framework. This can be done by fitting new knowledge into existing schemata (assimilation) or by restructuring the mental framework itself (accommodation). Schemata are abstract mental constructs that connect existing concepts and form a web of related concepts that contribute to how the learner interprets experiences. While each individual possesses unique schemata, some overlap does exist between schemata so that it is possible to construct a common understanding of concepts. Constructivists also hold that learning occurs through social interaction. Individuals "negotiate" meaning through interaction with others, thereby building deeper understanding of other points of view and a more complex understanding of the world. Constructing a common understanding of meaning is accomplished through symbolic exchanges, which can be either verbal or textual. Thus, a sharing of ideas helps to build shared meaning. While each individual maintains his or her own unique understanding, come aspects of the concepts explored through social interaction will evolve. (Smith-Gratto, 2000).

Other aspects of constructivist theory are relevant to the preparation of school leaders. For example, constructivists believe that knowledge is constructed rather than transmitted. Therefore the role of the teacher is to assist learners to construct their own meaning from the experiences they have by providing those experiences and guiding the meaning-making process. Moreover, constructivists hold that knowledge results from activity and is embedded in that activity. Knowledge is also anchored in the context in which learning activities take place. Thus the knowledge that the learner constructs

consists not only of content, but also an understanding of the context in which that content was acquired. This means that a true mastery of new skills and knowledge is attained only when the learner is able to apply them in a meaningful context. In a very real way, constructivists see learning as "meaning-making." The construction of meaning is begins when the learner is confronted with a problem, a question, confusion, disagreement, or a need and desire to know. Meaning can be shared with others and new meaning can result from conversation, debate, dialog, and discussion among participants in a learning situation. Thus learning occurs through the interaction of the learner with others in a knowledge-building community (Jonassen, Peck & Wilson, 1999). The most productive learning situation, then, is one that utilizes what Walker (1995) calls "generative forms of instruction" (p. 184). These forms include team learning, shared inquiry, action research, reflective writing and discussion, and the use of narrative, story and metaphor.

Constructivist theory also lends itself to a definition of leadership that is particularly relevant to educational settings. This conception of leadership "incorporates the same ideas that underlie constructivist learning: Adults learn through the process of meaning and knowledge construction, participation, and reflection" (Lambert, 1995, p. 29). Leadership is defined as the active engagement of others in the processes that create the conditions for learning and which result in the formulation of a common understanding of teaching and learning. According to Lambert, constructivist leadership consists of

> the reciprocal processes that enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a common purpose about schooling (p. 29).

The necessary reciprocal process, the exchange of ideas, concerns, and aspirations, requires maturity on the part of teachers and administrators that emerges only when opportunities for meaning-making in stable communities extend over a period of time. Thus leadership grows out of sustained relationships between people in a learning community.

A constructivist definition of leadership represents an evolution in our understanding of who leads and how leadership is exercised (Walker, 1995). Leadership is not role-specific, but grows out of a mutuality of purpose, shared values, and communities of memory that connect teachers and administrators who work in the same school (or school district) and are embarked on the effort to create professional knowledge and grow together. This leadership style differs dramatically from the "command and control" style of leadership that has characterized administrator behavior in the past. It may be the precise style required as we enter the new millennium.

Integrating technology.

Technology should play a significant role in the preparation of school leaders. Typically technology is integrated into learning in the form of chat rooms, e-mail, and discussion lists. These techniques are important tools and contribute to the social interactions so critical to constructivist approaches to learning (Smith-Gratto, 2000). But technology may also be thought of in a much larger context. Jonassen, Peck, & Wilson (1999) write that

> [t]echnology is more than hardware. Technology consists of the designs and the environments that engage learners. Technology can also consist of any reliable technique or method for engaging learners, such as cognitive learning strategies and critical thinking skills (p. 12).

Defined this way, technology encompasses the total learning environment and becomes a virtual partner with the learner as he or she begins to construct knowledge. Technology is an intellectual tool kit that enables the learner to build more meaningful personal interpretations of new knowledge.

Technology can support a constructivist approach to adult learning and development in a number of different ways. Specifically, technology can serve as

- a tool to support knowledge construction;
- as an information vehicle for exploring knowledge and to support learning by constructing;
- as a context to support learning by doing;

- as a social medium to support learning by conversing; and
- as an intellectual partner to support learning by reflecting (Jonassen, Peck, & Wilson, 1999).

Constructivist learning theory and the imaginative use of technology can do much to enhance the preparation of educational leaders.

Conclusion.

The program described above is only one approach to the preparation of school leaders. It is believed, however, that by incorporating standards, by designing instructional strategies with constructivist learning theory in mind, and by the extensive use of technology, we stand a better chance of producing the quality of superintendent who can be successful in a demanding and rapidly changing public school environment.

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